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MAH JONGG MADE EASY 2022

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We are pleased to offer this newly revised edition of Mah Jongg Made Easy. The Standardization Committee spent many hours incorporating our members' comments and suggestions into this new edition and we hope you will find it useful.

Questions about this book, or the game, will be gladly answered as we have for over 80 years, by sending us a stamped self-addressed envelope or calling us on the phone.

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Revised 2020

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PREFACE

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Mah Jongg or Mahj, as it often called, is a fascinating, rummy-like game, played with tiles, rather than cards. China is the game's birthplace, but its exact origins are shrouded in story and myth. Some claim it was the game of Chinese royalty, played in secret to keep the knowledge to themselves while some say it was played in the Royal Court by concubines. Still others say it was invented by a Chinese General to amuse his troops during long months of battle. More recent investigations point to early versions of this popular game appearing as recently as 150 years ago in China as a variant of early card games. Whichever story you believe, there is general agreement that the game we play and love originated in China and popularized in the United States around 1920, when Joseph Babcock wrote 'The Rules of Mah-Jongg', commonly referred to as the 'Red Book'. It was the beginning of a craze.

To this day, *Mah Jongg* is still the most popular game in the Orient. It is interesting to note that the rules of the game played in North China differ from those played in South China. When this ancient game was introduced into this country in 1920, the best of the two games was incorporated into the American version. This original game was enthusiastically received by the American public, as well as by game players throughout the European continent. Many players thought the game would be improved and simplified by adding new combinations of tiles and eliminating some of the old combinations. Before long, every group made its own hand combinations. This became very confusing.

In 1937, a number of Mah Jongg enthusiasts met in New York City to standardize the game so that all *Mah Jongg* players would play the same hands and rules. It was at this meeting that the National Mah Jongg League, Inc. was founded. Each year the *National Mah Jongg League*, Inc. changes the hands and rules in order to provoke more interest to the game. The *National Mah Jongg League*, Inc. is a Not-For-Profit organization that donates to charitable causes.

Today there are millions of dedicated Mah Jongg players throughout the world. The ancient game of the Mandarins is a popular American pastime and *Mah Jongg* has an established place in the game world.

Through the endeavors of the *National Mah Jongg League*, Inc., and this Instruction Book, more people are being encouraged to become *Mah Jongg* players. A very small amount of time and effort is required to master the elementary principles of the game. Your patience in mastering the fine points of *Mah Jongg* will be repaid many times over by the keen enjoyment that is derived from this game.

“Mah Jongg Made Easy” is a valuable handbook and guide for the beginner as well as the advanced player, and is especially helpful for those teaching *Mah Jongg* to others.

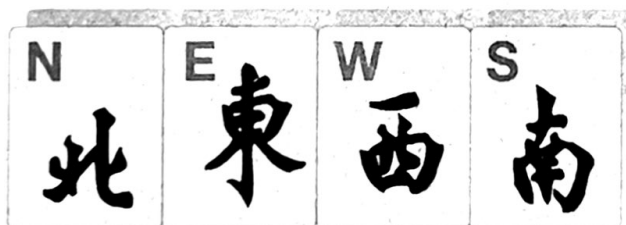
DESCRIPTION OF MAH JONGG TILES AND MAH JONGG PLAYING CARDS

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Mah Jongg is a game played with 152 tiles or 152 Mah Jongg Kards. When tiles are used, four racks are needed. When using Kards, they are dealt like ordinary playing cards, giving East (the hostess or host) 14 Kards and the other players 13. No racks are needed when playing with Kards.

The first time a beginner sees Mah Jongg tiles, it seems that memorizing the names of all the Chinese symbols is an impossible task. Actually, this is the easiest part of the game.

Tiles are used to form combinations as shown on the Official Standard Hands and Rules card. Combinations are made by matching tiles together. Matching tiles are identical tiles of the same suit and same number or same Dragon, same Wind or same Flower. Two identical tiles are a Pair, 3 identical tiles are a Pung, 4 identical tiles are a Kong, 5 identical tiles (must include at least 1 Joker) are a Quint, and 6 identical tiles (must include at least 2 Jokers) are a Sextet.

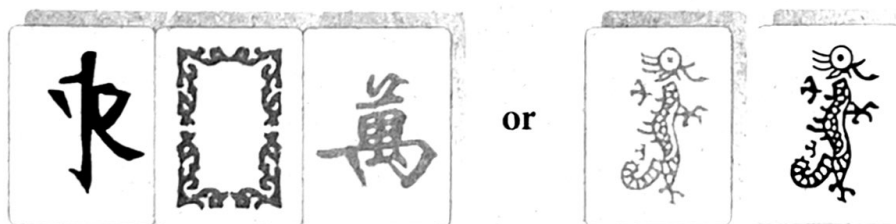
Winds



Although marked with the Chinese symbol, it is easy to know at a glance the name of each Wind as the letter “N” for North, “E” for East, “W” for West and “S” for South is engraved on the upper left corner of each tile. **There are four of each Wind.**

Pick out the Winds from your set of tiles and become acquainted with them. *These tiles collectively are known as “NEWS”.*

Dragons



Red Dragon, Soap (White Dragon), Green Dragon or Green, Red Dragon

The three *Dragons* are Red, Soap and Green. When discarding, they are commonly referred to as “Red”, “Green” or “Soap”.

The *Red Dragon* is represented by a symbol or dragon engraved in red. There are four Red Dragons.

The *Green Dragon* is represented by a symbol or dragon green in color. There are four Green Dragons.

The *White Dragon* is usually a tile with a blue border around the edge. This is often referred to as “Soap”. Only this Dragon can represent a zero. The Soap, when used as a zero, can be used with any suit. It can be used with Dots, Bams, Craks. There are four Soap Dragons.

Now you know 28 tiles

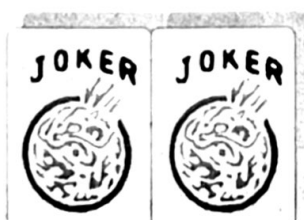
| Matching Dragons | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Craks with Reds | Dots with Soaps | Bams with Greens |

Flowers



The National Mah Jongg League Standard Hands and Rules is based on 8 Flowers. Each manufacturer of Mah Jongg tiles has a different group of designs for its Flower tiles. Some sets depict Flowers, Mandarins and Seasons; however, they are all used as Flower tiles. Some manufacturers have numbered the Flower tiles. Those manufacturers' numbers have no meaning under the Official Standard Hands and Rules (referred to as the “card”) published by the National Mah Jongg League, Inc. Most Mah Jongg sets come with extra Flower tiles.

Jokers



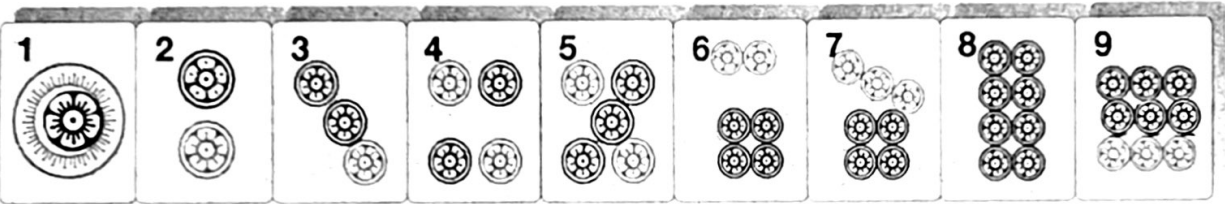
The National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules is based on 8 Jokers. **Jokers may be used to replace any tile (Numeral, Wind, Dragon or Flower), in a Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet only. Not every set comes with Joker tiles.** In order to remedy this, any extra tiles that come with the set may be converted into Jokers by using Joker decals on the extra tiles. Joker decals are available from the *National Mah Jongg League, Inc.*

SUITS

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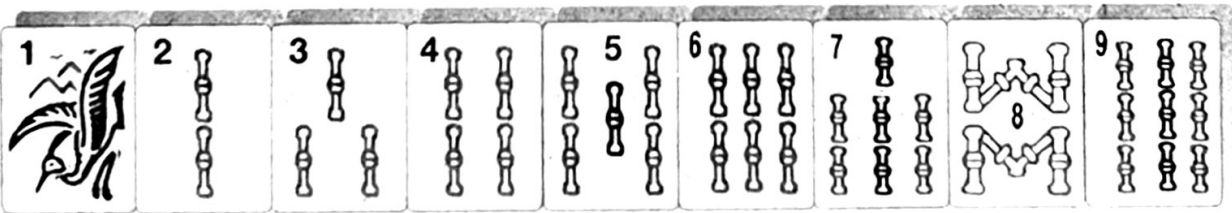
There are three suits - Dots, Bams and Craks. Each suit runs from one to nine. There are four identical tiles for each numeral, making thirty-six tiles in each suit.

Dots



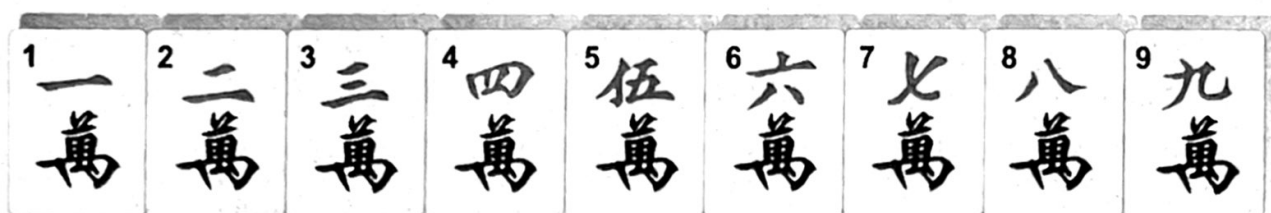
Each “*Dot*” has as many dots on the tile as the number engraved on the upper left corner. **Note that there is one large circle on the “one Dot”, two circles on the “two Dot” and so forth.** This pattern continues up to the “*nine Dot*” which has nine circles. Lay out the Dots, four of each numeral, and become familiar with them.

Bams



“*Bams*” are usually engraved in green with the numerals on the upper left corner. **“One Bam” is usually a Bird.** The tiles running from two to nine are made up of small bamboo twigs corresponding with the number on the tile. *There are some red markings on the five, seven and nine Bams.* Lay out all the *Bams*, four of each numeral and become familiar with them.

Craks



“Craks”, like Dots and Bams, have a number engraved in the upper left hand corner. Each Crak, from one to nine, bares a Chinese symbol in the center of the tile. The symbol is the translation of the numeral on the tile. Pick out the Craks and be able to recognize them at a glance.

Now you have been introduced to the Winds and Dragons, Flowers, Jokers and the three suits (Dots, Bams and Craks) that comprise all Mah Jongg symbols in the tiles or Kards.

FORMALITIES

.....

Now that you are familiar with the tiles, the next step is understanding how different combinations of tiles form a hand. Once the beginner recognizes how the different Suits, Numerals, Winds and Dragons, Flowers and Jokers are combined together to form definite patterns, understanding the rules of play will become easy.

The object of the game is to be the first player to complete one of the hands listed on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules. It is good practice to match your own tiles to the different combinations shown on the Official Standard Hands and Rules and in this way become familiar with the fourteen tiles that make a winning hand.

Another way to memorize the hands is by playing a solitaire practice game. Place the tiles face down in the center of the table, mix thoroughly, and pick any thirteen tiles at random. Use these as your basic hand, then arrange your tiles and proceed to pick and discard until you complete a definite hand. In this manner you should find it easier to memorize the hand you filled in by seeing the correct combinations.

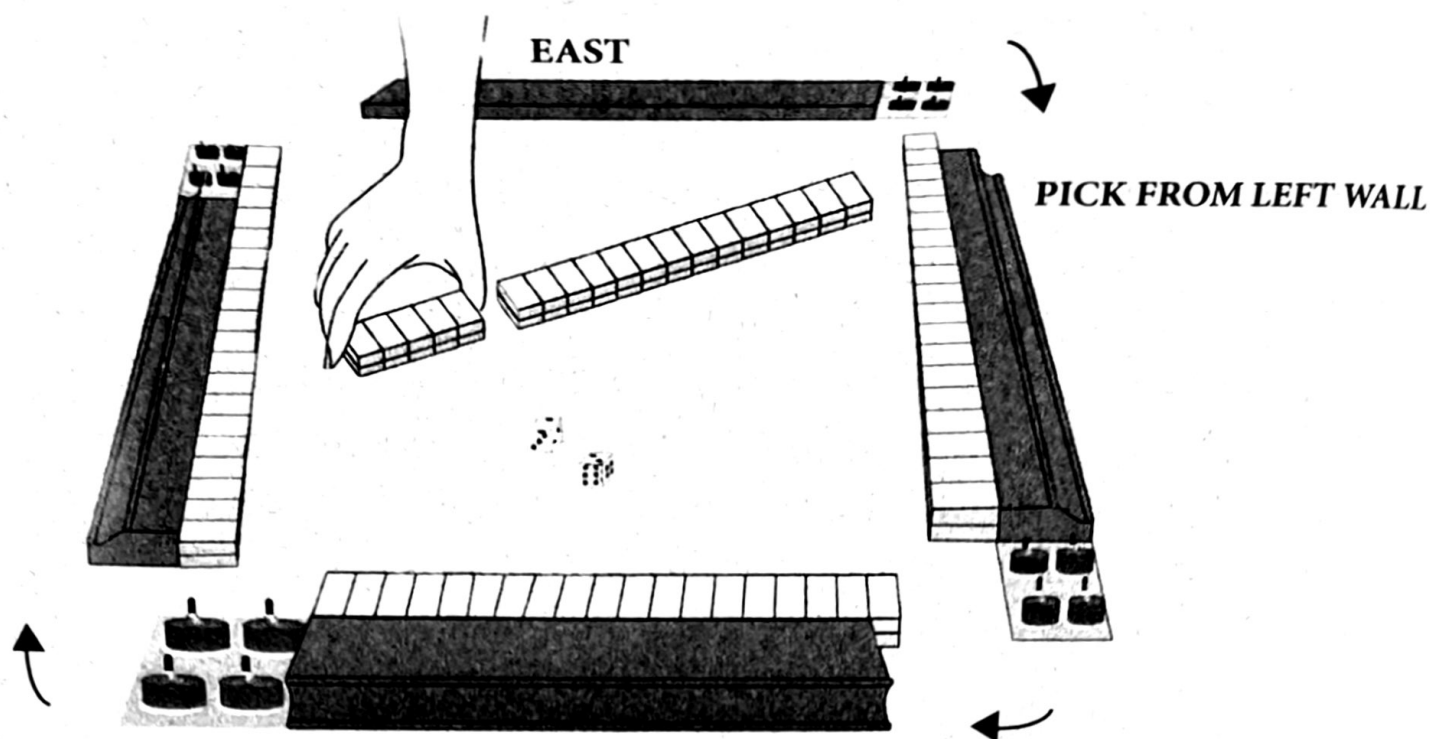
USE OF RACKS FOR TILE GAME ONLY

Racks are needed at the start of the game to build a double-tiered wall in front of each player. Each wall is comprised of 19 double-tiered tiles. Racks are desirable throughout the game because they make it easier to view and arrange the tiles which make up each hand. When a tile is called for an exposure, the tiles in the exposure are placed on top of the rack, face up. When Mah Jongg has been declared, the completed hand is also exposed on top of the rack for verification.

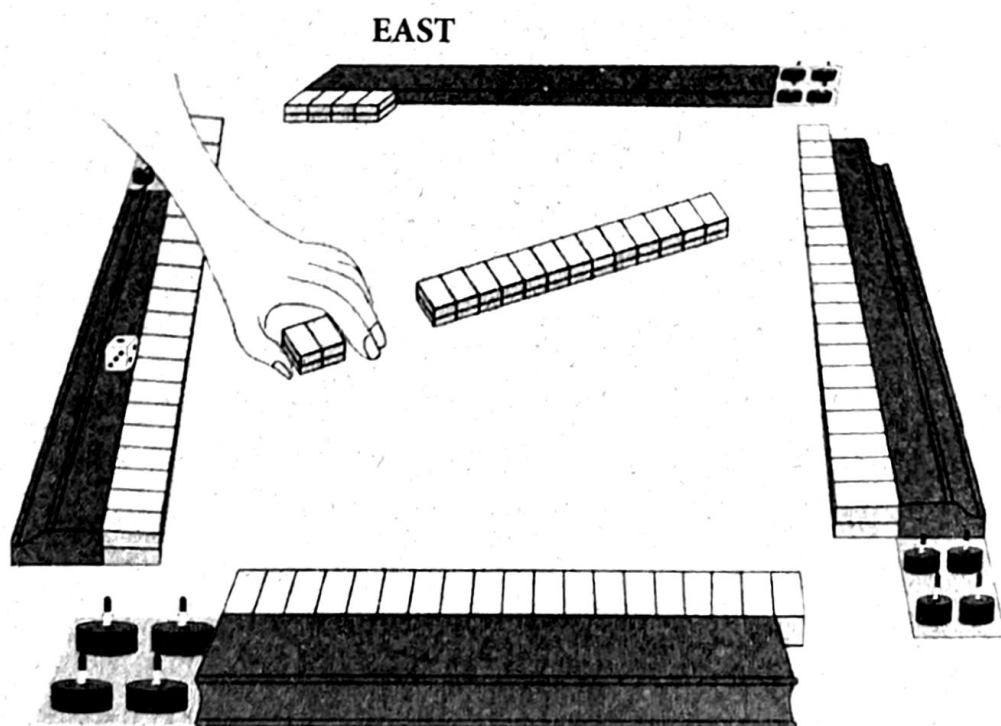
BUILDING AND BREAKING OF THE WALL AND USE OF DICE

All tiles are placed face down in the center of the table and thoroughly mixed. The one hundred and fifty-two tiles are divided into four walls, two tiers high, in front of each rack. The wall of tiles is pushed forward with the aid of the rack to enable each player, starting with East, to reach for the tiles.

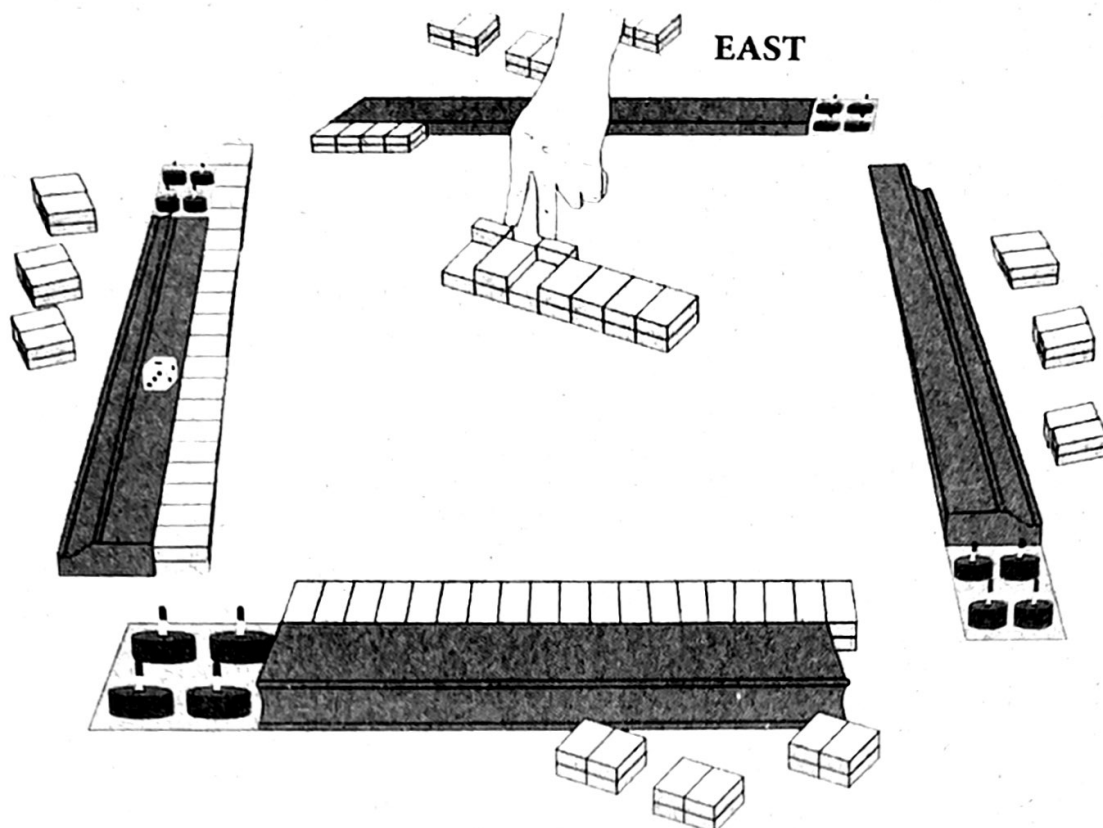
In most games, the host or hostess is East first. In games away from home, a pair of dice is used at the beginning of the game to determine which player will be East. The dice are rolled and the player receiving the highest total of the two dice is East. The only advantage in being East is that East starts the game with fourteen tiles. When the game is completed, the player to the right of East becomes East for the next game.



After the walls are built, East throws the dice. The number designated on the dice shows East how many piles on the double-tiered wall to count, moving from the extreme right to the left. East makes a break in the wall by taking the next four tiles to the left of the last tile counted. For example, if East throws a total of four, East counts the double-tiered tiles in front of East's rack from right to left, 1-2-3-4, and stops at this point. East then makes an opening and takes the first four tiles, two each from the upper and lower tiers, from the left of the opening.



The player to the right of East takes the next four tiles, the third player the next four tiles and the fourth player takes the next four tiles. This procedure is repeated for three rounds, until each player has 12 tiles.



East now takes the first and third tile from the top tier. The other three players, each in turn, take one tile. Right of East takes the first tile on the bottom row. Across from East takes the next top tile and the player to the left of East takes the next bottom tile. We recommend that each player pick their own tiles and that these tiles be left in stacks as shown above until all of the tiles are picked. The broken wall now remains with one loose bottom tile. Each player should now have 13 tiles, except East, who has 14. During play, after East's wall has been depleted, the player to the left pushes out their wall. Picking from the Walls goes to the left. **PLAY TO THE RIGHT, PICK FROM THE LEFT.**

OBJECT OF THE GAME

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The object of the game is to form combinations of Suits, Numerals, Winds and Dragons, Flowers and Jokers, as illustrated on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules.

One of the most difficult tasks for beginners is to determine which hand to play. When thirteen tiles are before you (East has fourteen tiles), it is often confusing to know at a glance which combination to play. Each player should arrange their hand into specific groups.

For example, if a player has picked mostly Winds or Dragons, that selection of tiles should suggest one or more of the hand combinations illustrated under the heading Winds and Dragons on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules. If the majority of tiles picked at the opening of the game consist of even numerals, regardless of suit, then turn to the 2-4-6-8 group on the Official Standard Hands and Rules and find the illustrated hand which resembles your tiles. The same procedure applies to the odd numeral group 1-3-5-7-9 and the 3-6-9 category.

CHOOSING A HAND

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Players should sort their hands according to Suits, Numerals, Winds and Dragons, Flowers and Jokers, and decide which hand to play. There are over fifty variations of Mah Jongg hands illustrated clearly on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules card. The card illustrates the various tile combinations that make winning hands. In illustrating the hands, each color signifies a suit. A hand shown in one color represents any one-suited hand. Two colors indicate any two suits. Three colors represent any three suits. A specific color on the card does not specify a particular suit. For example, if a hand is shown in 3 colors, it means any 3 suits IN ANY ORDER. If it is shown in green as the first color, it does not mean Bams, etc. The hands are clearly marked "C" for concealed, "X" for exposed and the value to be paid for each hand. An exposure is three of a kind (Pung), four of a kind (Kong), five of a kind (Quint) or six of a kind (Sextet).

THE CHARLESTON

.....

After the players have arranged their tiles, sorted the Suits, Winds and Dragons, and studied their hands to determine which combination of tiles is most likely to develop into a winning hand, they may get rid of tiles they do not want by passing them to the other players during the "Charleston". The first Charleston is compulsory, even if a player has drawn a "set" hand from the wall. Exception: If East, who has 14 tiles, draws a Mah Jongg hand, the Charleston is waived. This is called a "Heavenly Hand". East wins instantly and gets paid double from all.

THE FIRST CHARLESTON (compulsory)

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The order of the first Charleston is as follows:

- 1ST PASS - Each player passes three unwanted tiles to player on right.
- 2ND PASS - Three unwanted tiles to player opposite.
- 3RD PASS - Three unwanted tiles to player on left. On this pass, if you find you cannot spare any of the tiles in your hand, you may take one, two or all three tiles that are being passed to you and pass them to the player on your left, without looking at them. This is called a "Blind Pass" and must not be looked at by the player making this "Blind Pass".

SECOND CHARLESTON *(Not Compulsory)*

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The second Charleston is optional. It is permitted only if all four players agree. If any player objects, the second Charleston is not played. The order of the second Charleston is as follows:

- 1ST PASS - Three unwanted tiles to player on left.
- 2ND PASS - Three unwanted tiles to player opposite.
- 3RD PASS - Three unwanted tiles to player on right; however, as in the first Charleston, a blind pass may be made on the final right pass.

Note: In the event that more than one person wants to do a blind pass, East begins by passing 1, 2 or 3 tiles, and says to the next player I.O.U. Each player repeats the same thing, with East picking up their last pass of that Charleston and making good to the player to whom they owe tile(s).

OPTIONAL PASS

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After you have completed the three passes in the first and/or second Charleston, you have the option to make one final pass. This pass is always the last pass of the Charleston. One, two or three or no tiles may be passed to the player sitting opposite.

The amount of tiles exchanged in this pass is dictated by the player wanting the fewer number of tiles. If you do not want to exchange any tiles, then there is no optional pass between you and the player opposite.

When you decide on the hand(s) you want to play, try to fill in the tiles you need during the Charleston. If your hand is not improved by the tiles passed during the Charleston, you may wish to take advantage of the tiles in your hand as a result of those passes and select a different hand.

OTHER TIPS AND RULES FOR THE CHARLESTON

- If it is discovered, during the Charleston, that any player has an incorrect number of tiles, the hands are thrown in and replayed.
- Passing two or three of a kind, all Dragons, Winds, same numerals or more than one Flower is not advisable. Keep in mind that you do not want to contribute to another player's winning hand.
- A Joker may never be passed.
- Your three tiles must always be passed before you take the three tiles that are being passed to you.
- If you have Mah Jongg during the Charleston, you may not stop the passing. You may only stop the Charleston after the first left.
- If East has Mah Jongg before the Charleston begins, the Charleston is waived, and East declares Mah Jongg immediately. This is referred to as the "Heavenly Hand". It is considered a self-picked Mah Jongg, and the winner collects double from each player.
- If you are East and have Mah Jongg after the Charleston, you may declare Mah Jongg immediately. This is referred to as the "Earthly Hand". It is considered a self-picked Mah Jongg, and the winner collects double from each player.

THE PLAY

The game begins with East discarding an unwanted tile after the Charleston. This tile is discarded face up, calling it by name. As soon as the tile is discarded, any player wanting that tile for an exposure has the right to claim it, preference being given to the player next in turn unless another player has called and started to expose. To claim a discard the player must verbalize their call by letting the other players know that they are claiming that discard. They may say "call", "take", "I want that", etc. The claimant must then expose on the rack the Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet which has been completed by the discarded tile. When exposing, it is preferable to place the called tile on top of your rack before taking the tiles in your rack to make the exposure. A player is not required to place exposures in the order in which they are shown on the card; however, when Mah Jongg is declared, tiles should be re-arranged to show the correct order. When a player has multiple exposures on the rack, it is courteous to leave a space between the exposures. The "call" or "take" has become the claimant's turn and the game then continues to the

right of that claimant. If the tile is claimed, by a player who is not next in turn, players sitting between the discarder and the claimant miss their turn. If the discarded tile is not claimed the player to the right of the discarder picks the next tile from the broken wall and discards an unwanted tile in the same manner. This continues until the game is completed.

When a player claims a tile for exposure, the tiles (Pungs, Kongs, Quints, or Sextets) must be placed on the top of the rack in front of the player for all to see. A player cannot claim a tile to expose a pair unless it is the final tile needed to complete Mah Jongg. A player may add to or take away from the exposure during this turn, as long as player has not discarded.

Exposed hands may also be played concealed, if the player is able to fill in the necessary tiles to complete the hand without claiming a discarded tile. A Joker may be used to complete any Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet.

Your choice of a concealed or exposed hand changes as the game continues according to the tiles you may pick; therefore, a concealed hand at any time may be switched to an exposed hand.

A concealed hand must be completed and shown on the rack when the 14th tile is picked or claimed and Mah Jongg is declared. All players should verify the declarer's hand.

A completed hand contains 14 tiles and is made up of different combinations of Suits, Numerals, Winds, Dragons, Flowers, and Jokers. The fourteenth tile may be thrown by another player or picked by the player who is set for Mah Jongg whether playing an exposed or concealed hand. Mah Jongg is then declared and verified and the game ends. The amount of the winning hand is then computed using the values on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules card. (See the rules for Standard Scoring as a shown on page 26.)

WALL GAME

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When all of the tiles have been picked and discarded and no player has declared Mah Jongg, this is called a "Wall Game". All the tiles are turned over face down, mixed thoroughly and the four walls are built again. You are now ready to start a new game. The next person in turn becomes East. The dice are thrown, the wall is broken to the right according to the designated number on the dice and the tiles are picked. The Charleston is repeated as before, and the game continues after the Charleston is completed.

MAH JONGG IN ERROR

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When a player declares Mah Jongg in error and exposes the hand, the hand is declared a "Dead" Hand. The disqualified player discontinues picking and discarding. The other players continue play. When Mah Jongg is declared by any of the remaining players, the disqualified player pays the winner full value of hand.

1. No player should throw in or expose own hand until the winner's hand is verified.
2. If a player calls Mah Jongg in error and the mistake is rectified immediately, before the hand is exposed or before other players expose or disturb their hands, the game continues without penalty.
3. (a) If a player calls Mah Jongg in error and exposes part or all of the hand and all other hands are intact, the game continues but the declarer's hand is "dead" and all tiles are returned to the rack. A Mah Jongg hand "intact" means that a player has not exposed any tiles from their hand, other than the tiles that had been called for an exposure before the player had declared Mah Jongg in error. The same penalty applies for calling a discard and making an incorrect exposure. "Dead" hand discontinues play, does not pick and discard and pays winner full value of hand.

(b) When a player declares Mah Jongg in error and has been playing an exposed hand, the Jokers which were in the correctly called exposure before the error may be redeemed by any of the other players with a like tile, when it is their turn. However, at the point the hand becomes "dead" the part of the hand that was in error is returned to the rack, and no Jokers may be redeemed by any of the other players. Please note that a concealed hand that has been incorrectly exposed for a declaration of Mah Jongg must be returned to the rack, the errant declarer stops picking and discarding and nothing can be redeemed from the concealed hand.

4. (a) If a player declares Mah Jongg in error and exposes part or all of their hand and all other hands are intact, the game continues, but the declarer's hand is "dead".

(b) If Player A declares Mah Jongg in error and one other player (Player B) exposes part or all of their hand the game continues with the two remaining players (Player C & D) whose hands are intact. If Player C's hand goes "dead", Player C pays the remaining player (Player D) double the value of the hand that Player C (3rd player) was attempting to make.

(c) If Player A declares Mah Jongg in error and two other player (Players B & C) throw in their hands, the player who declared Mah Jongg in error (Player A) pays the player who did not throw in their hand (Player D), double the value of the hand (Player A's hand) they were playing.

(d) If Player A declares Mah Jongg in error and Player B destroys the wall before the Mah Jongg is discovered to be erroneous, the game ends. The player who destroyed the wall (Player B) must pay the value of the lowest value on the card to the remaining players (Players C and D).

(e) If there are 3 "dead" hands which did not result from Mah Jongg in error, then the surviving player throws in their hand and nobody gets paid.
5. If a tile is called and exposed resulting in Mah Jongg in error, the called tile must remain with the hand, even though another player wants to call the tile for an exposure. The tile becomes "dead" along with the rest of the hand. However, if another player wants that same tile for Mah Jongg, it may be called and used to complete the player's hand for Mah Jongg.

DEFENSIVE PLAYING

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Most of the skill in playing Mah Jongg depends upon the ability to play a good defensive game. If a hand does not improve rapidly during the play and a large portion of the wall is exhausted, a player should break up their own hand and discard tiles that are useless to the other players. This is called "dogging" tiles.

Exchanging a Joker or Jokers can double the value of another player's hand by making the hand Jokerless.

If a player is thoroughly familiar with every hand, this player can usually judge by the exposed Pungs, Kongs, Quints, Sextets and discards, which combinations the other players are playing. An **experienced** player will always try not to discard a tile that is obviously needed by another player, but will discard the same tile as the player on the left, or some other "safe" tile.

At this stage of the game it is unwise to discard a tile that has not been discarded before. When "dogging", a Joker can be discarded and named the same as the previous tile.

While you are trying to complete your hand, remember it is just as important to prevent the other players from completing their hands.

YOU CANNOT MAH JONGG SECOND.

RULES AND PENALTIES

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1. All tiles must be turned face down and thoroughly mixed before the game starts.
 2. No looking ahead. Players are not permitted to pick the fourteenth tile from the wall before the player to the left discards a tile.
 3. Thirteen tiles must be either in or on your rack at all times. This includes the exposed part of the hand.
 4. Fourteen tiles are needed to complete a winning hand.
 5. After a winning hand or a wall game, the position of East moves to the player to the right of East.

6. (a) A tile cannot be claimed until correctly named. Correctly named tile may then be called for an Exposure or Mah Jongg. HOWEVER, if Mah Jongg is called with the incorrectly named tile, the game STOPS. Miscaller pays claimant four times the value of hand. Others do not pay.

(b) If the miscalled tile is called causing an invalid exposure, the calling player's hand is now "dead" and there is no penalty to the discarder of the incorrectly named tile.
7. Once a tile is named or discarded, the discarder cannot take it back. Down is Down.
8. If a player incorrectly assumes East position, the player continues to finish the game. The next game reverts back to the rightful East and the round continues, skipping East for the player who erred.
9. Should any player's hand contain the wrong number of tiles before the Charleston, the tiles are thrown in and the wall is broken again. If the player to the left of East has only twelve tiles after picking the tiles from the wall or after the Charleston, only this player may rightfully pick the thirteenth tile if East has not discarded the first tile.
10. (a) Should a player's hand contain the wrong number of tiles after East has discarded the first tile, or if an incorrect number of tiles are exposed, the player's hand is "dead". Mah Jongg cannot be called. The "dead" hand ceases to pick and discard but will pay the winner full value of hand. A player should not declare their own hand dead. It is up to other players to declare a hand "dead".

(b) Should two players have the wrong number of tiles, the other players may continue playing.

(c) Should three players have the wrong number of tiles, the game is replayed.
11. A player shall not be permitted to call a tile for an exposure or Mah Jongg after the player to the right of the discarder has drawn a tile from the wall and racked or discarded. A racked tile is defined as a tile that has been placed on the sloped part of the rack along with the player's other tiles.

12. When two discards of the same tile are thrown in rapid succession and a player wishes to claim the tile, for either Mah Jongg or exposure, the second discard must be taken.
13. (a) When two players call the same tile for exposure, the player next in turn to discarder is entitled to the claim EXCEPT when the other player has started to expose their tiles.
- (b) If two players call a tile for Mah Jongg, the player next in turn to discarder is entitled to the claim, EXCEPT when the other Mah Jongg declarer has begun to expose their tiles.
- (c) When two players call the same tile, one for exposure and the other for Mah Jongg, the Mah Jongg declarer always gets preference.
- (d) If two players call the same tile, one for Mah Jongg and one for exposure, but it is an incorrect Mah Jongg, the tile remains with the "dead" hand.
- (e) If two players call the same tile for Mah Jongg, and the player next in line displays an incorrect Mah Jongg, the called tile goes to the other player for Mah Jongg.
- (f) If two players simultaneously call a tile for Mah Jongg, the player next in turn is entitled to the claim, EXCEPT when the other Mah Jongg declarer has begun to expose their tiles.
14. If an incorrect exposure is made, the hand may be declared "dead" by any of the other three players. Bettor must remain silent. If the exposure goes unnoticed, the erring player should not announce it and continues to play. Of course, Mah Jongg cannot be made.
15. When Mah Jongg has been declared and exposed, no tile previously discarded may be called for an exposure or Mah Jongg.

16. If a player discards a tile that was claimed for Mah Jongg, but went out of turn, the game stops. The discarder pays 4x's the value of the hand to the winner. If claimed for an exposure the call is honored and the game continues.
17. If a player's last move before declaring Mah Jongg is to redeem a Joker from their own rack, it is considered self-picked and everyone pays the player double. This is called a "finesse" move.
18. You are committed to discarding a tile once it is fully named or the tile has been placed on the table.
19. A player's hand may go "dead" for a variety of reasons:
 - (a) **No Such Hand:** The exposed tiles do not represent any hand on the current Mah Jongg card.
 - (b) **Unwinnable Hand:** The exposed tiles indicate that a player is attempting to make a Mah Jongg which requires either single tiles or a pair for completion. If 3 or more of either the pair or the single tiles have already been discarded on the table, the hand may be called "dead". (Tiles in a player's hand cannot be counted toward the death declaration.)
 - (c) **Exposing Tiles While Playing A Concealed Hand:** Player's exposures indicate that a concealed hand is being played and tiles have been exposed erroneously.
 - (d) **Too Few or Too Many Tiles:** Player has either fewer than 13 tiles or more than 14 tiles.
 - (e) **Picking out of Turn:** If a player picks out of turn the player's hand is "dead."
20. **Pushing out the Wrong Wall:**
 - (a) If a player pushes out the wrong wall and a tile from the wrong wall is picked and racked, the player who racked now has a "dead" hand. The tile remains with the "dead" hand. The game continues from the wrong wall and then proceeds from the correct wall.

(b) If the wrong wall has been in play and someone calls Mah Jongg, they are entitled to the Mah Jongg and the person who pushed out the wrong wall pays for the table.

(c) When the wrong wall has been in play and noticed, all hands are thrown in and the game starts over.

21. Picking from the Wrong End:

(a) If more than one player has picked from the wrong end of the wall, the game ceases and the tiles are thrown in.

(b) If a player picks a tile from the wrong end of the wall, and racks the tile, the player's hand is "dead", and the other players continue playing from the proper end.

(c) If a player picks from the wrong end of the wall and discards, and another player calls that tile for Mah Jongg, the player who picked from the wrong end pays for the table.

22. If a tile is discarded resulting in Mah Jongg, the player who picked out of turn pays for the table.

23. If a player declares another player's hand "dead" (and the player whose hand has been called "dead" disagrees) at the end of the game, the challenge is resolved. Whichever player was incorrect at the time of the challenge, pays the other player 50 cents.

SPECIAL RULINGS FOR THE USE OF JOKERS

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1. The National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules (card) is based on 8 Flowers and 8 Jokers.

2. The Jokers may be used to replace any tile (Numeral, Wind, Dragon or Flower) in any Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet.

3. Jokers may be discarded at any time during the game and called the same as the previous discard. Joker or Jokers may be replaced in any exposure with a like symbol tile or tiles by any player, whether picked from the wall or in a player's hand, when it is the player's turn, however, you do not have to exchange a Joker.

4. Players must wait until their turn to redeem a Joker or Jokers by exchanging a like symbol tile or tiles for the Joker(s) taken from the exposure(s). Player must pick or call first before doing the Joker exchange. If you do a Joker exchange before you pick or call your hand is "dead".
5. Once a symbol tile has been named or discarded, it cannot be taken back to make an exchange for a Joker. Down is Down.
6. During the play, Jokers may be discarded and called the name of the previous discard. If a Joker was used in a hand and then exchanged with a symbol tile (and there are no other Jokers remaining in the hand), the hand is considered to be a "No Joker" hand.
7. A Joker cannot at any time be exchanged for a symbol tile. Only a symbol tile can be exchanged for a Joker.
8. You may not first exchange a symbol tile for a Joker and then use that Joker to call the last discard for either exposure or Mah Jongg. You must make your "call" first.
9. A Joker may never be passed during the Charleston. If it is, it must be given back.
10. At no time can a Joker be used for a single tile or in a pair. A Joker or Jokers may be used to replace any tile or tiles (a symbol tile is not necessary) in a Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet.
11. A discarded Joker can NEVER be picked up. IT IS A "DEAD" TILE.
12. When discarding a Joker a player may say "Joker", "Same" or actually repeat the name of the previously discarded tile. Regardless of what the discarded Joker is called, it may not be taken/called for any reason whatsoever.
13. There is no requirement that a player have any minimum number of "natural" tiles to complete a Pung Kong, Quint, or Sextet. These groupings of "identical" tiles may consist of all Jokers.
14. It is recommended that a player never touch another player's tiles. The player should first announce that a Joker exchange is to be made. The replacement tile should be handed to the player whose rack contains the Joker and that player makes the exchange and hands the Joker to the other player.

15. A Pung, Kong, Quint, or Sextet may consist of all Jokers.
16. A player may make as many Joker exchanges on a single turn as their tiles dictate.
17. If a player is in the midst of doing a Joker exchange, another player may not call a previously discarded tile even if the player has not racked the tile being exchanged.
18. Once a tile has been fully named, it cannot be exchanged for a Joker.
19. Jokers may be redeemed from a "dead" hand if they were exposed prior to the hand being declared "dead".
20. If an incorrect exposure results in a "dead" hand", but it is not realized until later in a game, Jokers in that exposure are not available for redemption.
21. No Jokers exposed prior to a Concealed hand being declared "dead" are redeemable, since they were part of an incorrect exposure.

SPECIAL RULINGS FOR THE USE OF FLOWERS

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1. Flowers are used to complete a definite pattern of a hand.
 2. Flowers may be passed during the Charleston.
 3. Flowers may be discarded at any time during the play and called "Flower"; however, the discarder must be cautious because another player may be in a position to call this Flower for an exposure or Mah Jongg.

RULES FOR BETTORS

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1. Bettor shall not be permitted to disclose a bet.
 2. Bettor shall not be permitted to change a bet during the play.
 3. If the bettor interferes with the play of the game in any way, they do not receive the benefits of the bet, but must pay appropriate amount due at the conclusion of the game.

4. Bettor pays or receives the same value as the player bet on.
5. Bettor is subject to all penalties as player bet on and pays the full value of the penalty score.
6. Bettor is entitled to bet on East when East claims Mah Jongg before the play starts.
7. Bettor should not make any correction until Mah Jongg has been declared, verified and paid by all players.
8. Bettor may bet on a "wall game", if after looking at all hands of the four players, Bettor feels there will be no winner. Usually there is an Asian design on the betting disk which indicates a wall game. If Bettor is correct and there is a wall game, Bettor receives the lowest value of any hand on the rules card.
9. Values (see Standard Scoring)
 - (a) If Bettor bets on a player who picks own Mah Jongg tile, the winner and Bettor each receive double the value of the hand.
 - (b) If Bettor bets on a player who Mah Jonggs on a tile which has been discarded by another player, the discarder pays double the value of the hand to, both the Bettor and the Mah Jongg declarer. The other two players in the game pay both the Bettor and the Mah Jongg declarer the single value of the hand.
 - (c) If Bettor does not bet correctly, Bettor pays the winner the same value as the player bet on.
 - (d) If Bettor bets on a Wall game and no one wins, the Bettor receives lowest value on card from each player.
10. A bettor may not speak even though it is realized that an error has been made. The bettor remains silent and either pays or receives appropriate payment. No discussion involving the bettor may occur until after the declarer has been paid by all players.

STANDARD SCORING *(How to compute your score)*

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When a player picks own Mah Jongg tile, all players pay double the value of the hand. For example, if the winning hand is valued at twenty-five cents, each player pays the winner fifty cents.

When a player Mah Jonggs on a tile discarded by another player, only the discarder pays double value and all other players pay single value.

When a player declares Mah Jongg on any hand, concealed or exposed, and no Jokers are part of the hand (exchanged Jokers from an exposure can make the hand Jokerless), the discarder pays winner 4x's the value of the hand. All other players pay 2x's the value of the hand. When a player picks own Mah Jongg tile and no Jokers are part of the hand, all players pay 4x's the value of the hand. Exception: **Singles and Pairs Group**, as the bonus is built into the value of these hands.

Bettor pays or receives the same amount as the player bet on. See rules for Bettors, page 24).

The value of each hand is listed under the heading "Values" on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules (card).

TWO-HANDED MAH JONGG

.....
Two players sit opposite each other and build their own walls and also the wall to the right. East position alternates. The tiles are drawn from the wall in the usual manner except the blank walls do not draw hands. The Charleston is omitted and East starts the game by discarding one tile.

THREE-HANDED MAH JONGG

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The three players draw tiles from the wall. Wall without a player does not draw any tiles. East takes the 1st tile, the next player takes the next tile, 3rd player takes the next tile, with East picking last, their 14th tile. The Charleston is omitted, and East starts the game by discarding the first tile.

FOUR-HANDED MAH JONGG

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When playing a four-handed game, there is no Bettor. To change the passing and picking in a four-handed game, the following method is used: The original East is “pivot” for the day. After each round, which consists of four games, the pivot who is the original East, changes seats with the player to the right. The pivot takes the dice to the new seat. After four more hands are played, the same procedure is repeated, with the pivot taking the dice, changing seats with the player on the right, and once again becoming East. This pattern continues throughout the game.

FIVE-HANDED MAH JONGG

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Five-handed Mah Jongg is played with four players at the table and one player who is the Bettor. After all the passes are completed, the fifth player bets on the player most likely to win. The Bettor indicates a bet by writing the player’s name on a blank piece of paper concealed from the others or by using the betting disk known as the “Bettor”. The disk contains four numerals: East is No. 1, the player to the right of East is No. 2, the player opposite East is No. 3 and the player to the left of East is No. 4. The fifth person, the Bettor, turns the betting disk to the number of the player likely to win. If the Bettor chooses to bet on a “wall game”, there is a Chinese symbol on the betting disc which may be chosen.

If the Bettor is correct and the player bet on is the winner, both the Bettor and the Mah Jongg declarer receive double the value of the hand made, from the discarder, and the other 2 players pay single the value of the hand to both the Bettor and the Mah Jongg declarer. If any other player wins, the Bettor pays the winner the same value as the player bet on. If the Bettor has bet on a ‘wall game’ and a ‘wall game’ occurs, all players pay the Bettor the lowest value on the card.

After a player has been East, the player is out and makes a place for the fifth player at the table. The position of East moves to the right, the same as in a regular four-handed game.

SIX-HANDED MAH JONGG

.....
As per "4 handed, 5 handed" may be played with four players seated at the table and two players watching all hands. After all the passes of the Charleston are completed, the two Bettors separately write the name of the player likely to win on a blank sheet of paper provided for betting. Two blank papers are used in a six-handed betting game. The Bettors do not discuss their choice.

Each Bettor remains out for two consecutive games. After each game, one Bettor takes East's place at the table. The dice are rolled between the two Bettors to determine who enters the game first. This is done for the first game only, after that the Bettors rotate in order of their positions at the table.

HOW TO PLAY WITH MAH JONGG KARDS

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The Mah Jongg playing Kards consist of one hundred and fifty-two Chinese tiles depicted on playing Kards. The symbol on the Chinese tile Kards are the same as the symbols on the tiles previously described in this book. Winning combinations of Kards are identical to those used in the game of tiles and shown on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules. (card)

Before starting the game, each player draws a Kard to determine East. High Kard determines East.

The deck of Mah Jongg Kards is thoroughly mixed by each of the players. The deck is divided into four stacks to facilitate mixing, then placed before East as one deck. The Kards are cut and East takes the first four Kards, then deals the next four Kards to the player on the right of East, the next four Kards to the opposite player and the next four Kards to the player on the left of East. This is repeated for three rounds. East then takes two more Kards and deals one more Kard to each of the other players. East then has fourteen Kards and all other players have thirteen Kards.. The order of dealing is from right to left.

Before starting the four-handed game there is an exchange of Kards called the Charleston. The first Charleston is compulsory, the second is optional as in the regular tiled Mah Jongg game.

East makes the first play by discarding any Kard from hand and placing it face up in the center of the table in rows, as all discards must be in clear view of all players during the game. The order of the players is from right to left. The procedure of picking, discarding and calling is identical to the game of Mah Jongg with tiles. When a Kard is called for a Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet for exposure, the player must expose Kards and leave them exposed throughout the rest of the game.

Since racks and metal chip holders are not used in the Kard game, ordinary small chips of various colors may be used for scoring. When chips are not available for the Mah Jongg game played with Kards, scoring may be computed with a pad and pencil.

Each player starts with a minimum of 1,000 points. As each game is completed, the amount of points won or lost is added to or subtracted from the original 1,000 points of each player. For example: In the first game, "A" picks own Mah Jongg Kard on a .25 point hand. Bettor did not bet correctly. All players, including Bettor, pay double the value of the hand.

**VARIATION OF
'MAH JONGG' WITH KARDS**

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When playing a two or three-handed game of Mah Jongg with Kards, the deck is thoroughly mixed by each player, then stacked in front of East. East takes the first four Kards and gives the next four Kards to the next player or players until each player has twelve Kards. East then takes two more Kards and gives each other player one more Kard. The Charleston is omitted in a two or three-handed game. East starts the game by discarding a Kard from hand. The game proceeds as in a four-handed game.

A five-handed game played with Kards is played exactly as the tile game. Four players are seated at the table and the fifth player bets on the hand that is likely to win.

REMINDERS AND HELPFUL HINTS

.....
No player should throw in or expose their own hand until the winner's hand is verified.

Any player may stop the Charleston after the first three compulsory passes without giving a reason for doing so.

As a reminder, please remember that exchanging a Joker or Jokers may double the value of a hand by making the player's hand Jokerless.

If a player replaces their own Joker which results in Mah Jongg, it is considered to be self-picked and claimant receives double the value of the hand from all players.

A Joker can never be exchanged for a symbol tile. Only a symbol tile can be exchanged for a Joker.

At no time can a Joker be used for a single tile or in a pair. A Joker or Jokers may be used to replace any tile or tiles in a Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet.

A zero may never be used in a consecutive run.

A tile cannot be claimed until correctly named. If a miscalled tile is wanted for an exposure it cannot be called unless the tile is correctly named. There is no penalty involved. If a miscalled tile is wanted for Mah Jongg, the game ends. Miscaller pays four times the value of the hand. Others do not pay.

We suggest that a player not throw a dangerous or obviously hot tile at any time or into a third or fourth exposure. Defensive play is recommended. Every pick and discard should be a challenge to the very last tile on the wall. This is part of the fun.

You may never add to or subtract from an exposure after you have discarded or any time later in the game.

Players must announce the value of their own hand. A player's score does not change if another player calls attention to the fact that the hand could be rearranged at a higher value. The player is only entitled to the value they have announced.

A discarded tile can never be called by a player and used to redeem a Joker in an exposure. A discarded tile can only be called for an exposure or for Mah Jongg.

When there are exposures indicating a definite hand is being played, the hand may be declared "dead" if all the necessary tiles to complete a single tile or pair needed in the hand is shown on the table as discards or in other player's exposures. The player whose hand is declared "dead" would discontinue picking and discarding.

If a tile is called for Mah Jongg in error, that tile remains part of the "dead" hand, even though another player wanted the same tile for exposure. Exception: If that tile were called for Mah Jongg by two players, and the player next in turn had declared Mah Jongg in error, the desired tile is given to the second player who declared Mah Jongg.

It is not required that a player have any natural tiles to complete a Pung, Kong, Quint, or Sextet. These groupings may consist of all Jokers.

A player whose hand has been declared "dead" must remain silent for the remainder of that hand.

If a player picks and discards out of turn and another player calls that tile for Mah Jongg, the out of turn player pays for the entire table.

A player should not announce that their hand is "dead". Even if a hand actually is dead, the player should continue to play defensively until someone else calls the hand "dead". If you announce your hand is dead, it is not officially "dead" until another player verifies that Mah Jongg cannot be made. Verifications can be made only when an exposed hand is being played and another player can deem the hand "dead", based on the fact that certain tiles have been discarded or have been called for exposure.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN MAH JONGG

.....

Bettor - The player making a bet, also the round disk to indicate player bet on.

Blind Pass - May be made by passing one, two or three tiles on last pass of both Charllestons, without looking at them.

Breaking the Wall - East determines, by the roll of the dice, the number of tiles that are to remain against the rack and are reserved for the end of game.

Call - To claim a tile that has been discarded by another player for exposure or Mah Jongg.

Card - National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands & Rules.

Charleston - The exchange of tiles between the players before the play starts.

Concealed Hand (also referred to as a Closed Hand) - Must be completed without a Call for an exposure except for the fourteenth tile which may be called for Mah Jongg.

Courtesy - The optional pass at the end of the Charleston.

Covered - When a tile has been discarded and/or named, it has "covered" the last discarded tile.

Dead Hand - When a player calls Mah Jongg in error or a hand which has incorrect exposures, or if a hand contains too few or too many tiles.

Discard - Any tile that has been placed on the table and/or named.

Dogging - When a player does not discard tiles that are obviously needed by other players. Very often a player will break up own hand in order to discard safe tiles.

Earthly Hand - When East declares Mah Jongg immediately following the Charleston.

East - Position referred to as the Pivot, or First Player.

Exposed Hand - May be completed with a call for exposure to complete either a Pung, Kong, Quint, or Sextet, as shown on the card.

Exposure - When a tile is claimed by a player who "calls" a discarded tile, the exposure is placed on top of the rack.

- Hand** - One of the many combinations of tiles shown on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules card.
- Hot Tile** - A tile that is obviously needed by another player.
- Heavenly Hand** - When East is able to declare Mah Jongg before the Charleston begins.
- Joker** - A tile used to replace any symbol tile in a Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet.
- Kards** - Playing cards used instead of tiles to play Mah Jongg.
- Kong** - Consists of four identical tiles.
- Natural tile** - A Non-Joker tile.
- Optional Pass** (also referred to as a Courtesy Pass) - At the end of the Charleston players have the option to exchange 1, 2, 3, or no tiles with the opposite player.
- Pair** - Consists of 2 identical tiles.
- Pung** - Consists of 3 identical tiles.
- Quint** - Consists of 5 identical tiles (must include at least one Joker except for a Quint of Flowers).
- Round** - Completed after four players have had a chance to be East.
- Run** - 2 or more Consecutive Numbers.
- Set Hand** - One in which the player is in a position to declare Mah Jongg with the winning 14th tile.
- Sextet** - Consists of 6 identical tiles (must include at least 2 Jokers).
- Soap** - Sometimes referred to as White Dragon and may also be used as a zero.
- Symbol** (also referred to as a Natural tile) - Any tile other than a Joker.
- Take** - A call for a tile that has been discarded by another player to form a Pung, Kong, Quint or Sextet in an exposed hand or for Mah Jongg.
- Wall Game** - When all tiles have been picked and Mah Jongg has not been made.
- Winning Hand** - A combination of 14 tiles as shown on the National Mah Jongg League's Official Standard Hands and Rules card.
- Zero** - The "Soap" Dragon (White) - The White Dragon, when used as a Zero, may be used with any suit.